

John Dill Store (Wootten Store)  
2 Market Street  
Frederica  
Kent County  
Delaware

HABS No. DE-174

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DEL,  
1-FRED,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOHN DILL STORE (Wootten Store)

HABS DE-174

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Location: 2 Market Street (southeast corner of Market and Front Streets), Frederica, Kent County, Delaware.

USGS Frederica Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 18.459650.4317660.

Present Owner: Wallace P. Wooten

Present Occupant: Wootten IGA Market

Significance: The Wootten Store is one of the earliest commercial structures still in use in Frederica. Erected by 1797, all subsequent deeds refer to a "store house" on the property. In 1873 additional land was purchased to provide space for an addition to the store.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1779-1797 - probably late in this period because of the brickwork. There is no indication of a store on this lot when John Dill purchased the land, but when his estate was included in the 1797 assessment of the county the store house was valued at £50. This indicates a substantial structure.
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The store was erected on lot #8 in Frederica.

1779: 13 Fifth Month. Solomon Edmonson to John Dill. Lots 8 and 22 sold for £12 subject to an annual ground rent of £3 payable on 29 September to Jonathan Dill, his heirs and assigns. If the rent is not paid, Emerson has the right to enter upon the land for the purpose of distraining the rent. No mention of specific buildings on the property. (Kent County Deed Book W-1, p. 179).

1797: Assessment of the estate of the heirs of John Dill values "1 Store House opposite the Tavern subject to ground rent" at £50. (K. C. Assessment Book, Murderkill Hundred 1797, p. 35).

- 1806: 6 March. Alienation bond of \$2500 from Andrew Dill, Hetty Dill, Matthew Lowber and Daniel Walker to Samuel White. When White pays £266-15 to A. Dill and £145-10 to Hetty Dill, the four grantors will convey their undivided interest in the lands of John Dill to him; this includes lots 8 (with the store house) and 22, and one near the wharf. (K. C. Deed Book L-2, pp. 66-67).
- 1809: 16 March. Daniel Walker and Mary, his wife, Samuel White and Sarah, his wife, Luther Temple and Hetty, his wife, Andrew Dill and Sarah, his wife, and Letitia Dill (the heirs of John Dill) to Perry Boon. Sale of lots 8 and 22 (subject to ground rent of \$4 on each lot payable to Jonathan Emerson) and a lot near the wharf. (K. C. Deed Book 0-2, pp. 14-16).
- 1809: 31 March. Samuel White transferred his right and title to the property in bond to Perry Boon for \$1650. (K. C. Deed Book L-2, pp. 66-67).
- 1812: 2 December. Will of Perry Boon proved. He bequeathed to his son, Jacob Boon, several tracts of land in Frederica including "the Lot of ground and dwelling House whereon I now live...and the Store House opposite across the Street therefrom," the latter subject to ground rent. (K. C. Will Book P-1, pp. 4-5).
- 1832: December. Rachel Boone, widow of Jacob Boone, petitions for a division of her husband's estate. Among the property was a "Brick Store House... formerly occupied by Boone and Brown, now in the tenure of Joseph Brown." The Orphans Court ordered the widow's dower laid off; it was done by the March term 1833. (K. C. Orphans Court Book M-1, pp. 186-189; K. C. Orphans Court Plot Book #1, p. 134, for the lot including the store house).
- 1839: 19 October. Paris T. Carlisle and Rachel, his wife, the widow of Jacob Boone, sold the widow's dower to James Henry Boone for \$800. (K. C. Deed Book p-3, p. 204).
- 1855: 14 November. James H. Boone and Margaretta, his wife, to William Townsend. The lot containing the brick store house, now occupied in part by J. H. Boone and in part by Wm. Townsend and son, and three other lots in Frederica sold for \$3000. \$4 ground rent on the store house lot, paid annually on 27 September, due to J. H. Boone, his heirs and assigns. (K. C. Deed Book K-4, p. 97).

- 1864: 5 December. William Townsend and Elizabeth, his wife, to Samuel W. Hall. The lot containing the brick store house and five other lots in Frederica sold for \$3757.50. The lot containing the store house is subject to a \$4 annual ground rent payable to J. H. Boone. (K. C. Deed Book X-4, pp. 444-446).
- 1869: 20 September. Samuel W. Hall to James T. Postles. The lot containing the brick store house and five other lots in Frederica sold for \$3750. The lot containing the store house is subject to a \$4 annual ground rent payable to J. H. Boone. (K. C. Deed Book I-5, p. 524).
- 1871: 5 January. James T. Postles and Emma, his wife, to Robert W. Reynolds. One undivided half part of six tracts in Frederica, including the one with the brick store house, sold for \$1875. The store house and lot are subject to a \$4 ground rent payable annually to J. H. Boone. (K. C. Deed Book M-5, pp. 233-235).
- 1873: 24 September. Purnell Postles to Robert W. Reynolds and James T. Postles. Three hundred and forty square feet of ground on the south side of Front (Main) Street in Frederica adjoining the eastern end of the store house owned and occupied by Reynolds and Postles sold for \$300. (K. C. Deed Book P-5, pp. 323-324).
- 1890: 1 January. Robert W. Reynolds and Annie E., his wife, to James T. Postles. All the one-half undivided interest of the grantor in five lots in Frederica, including the one containing the store house, and the addition to its dimensions "to afford room for enlargement of said store house," sold for \$3000. The lot with the store house is subject to a \$4 ground rent to be paid annually to J. H. Boone. (K. C. Deed book E-7, pp. 238-246).
- 1892: 19 December. Samuel W. Hall, Administrator D.B.N. of James H. Boone to James T. Postles. By virtue of an order of the Orphans Court, the \$4 ground rent Boone held to Lot #8 in Frederica (the lot on which the brick store house stands) was sold at public vendue on 8 December 1891 to pay the debts of his estate. Postles purchased it for \$70.67. (K. C. Deed Book M-7, pp. 191-193).
- 1930: 27 March. R. Reynolds Postles and Mary, his wife, to Wilbur E. Postles. At the death of James T. Postles in 1929 his property descended to his two sons, R. Reynolds Postles and Wilbur E. Postles. For \$100 R. R.

Postles sold the lot and brick store house in Frederica to W. E. Postles. (K. C. Deed Book U-13, p. 203; K. C. Will Book Q-2, p. 337).

- 1953: 14 September. Wilbur E. Postles and Mildred B., his wife, to George R. Miller and Lillian P., his wife. The lot of ground in Frederica containing the brick store house sold for \$3000. (K. C. Deed Book E-20, p. 131).
- 1959: 19 October. George R. Miller, Jr. and Lillian P., his wife, to Lewis R. Wootten and Wallace P. Wootten. The lot of ground on the corner of Market and Front Streets in Frederica sold for \$5000. (K. C. Deed Book V-22, pp. 65-66).
- 1961: 8 December. Wallace P. Wootten and Ruth Virginia, his wife, and Lewis R. Wootten and Catherine C., his wife, to Lorraine Schmittinger. Two lots in Frederica, including the one on which the brick store house stands, were sold for \$1. (K. C. Deed Book V-22, pp. 66-68).
- 1961: 8 December. Lorraine Schmittinger to Wallace P. Wootten and Ruth Virginia, his wife. The lots in Frederica transferred to Schmittinger on 8 December 1961 by W. P. Wootten and L. R. Wootten are resold to W. P. Wootten for \$1.

4. Alterations and additions: In 1873 land was purchased to provide space for an addition to the store on the east (rear). This addition is marked in the brickwork of the north side where the bond changes from Flemish to common. Other changes in the brickwork indicate that a first-floor window was moved; originally they were probably symmetrically arranged under the second-floor windows.

A one-story addition on the south may date from 1961. Where the south wall was removed for this addition, two columns have been added to support the upper floor.

A modern aluminum storefront has been installed in the west facade of the building. There have been numerous changes on the interior.

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: One of the earliest commercial structures in Frederica, this store remains virtually intact. The one-story addition on the south will not be considered here.
2. Condition of fabric: good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 22'x70', two-and-a-half stories.
2. Foundation: Stone.
3. Walls: Red brick laid in Flemish bond, except in eastern addition where it is common bond. Three-brick-wide belt course between first and second stories. Brick on the west front, under the canopy, is painted red.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick load-bearing walls with wood framing. Every other rafter has a strut to the ceiling joists. A large wood beam supported by wood columns runs down the center of the cellar supporting the first floor. Wood columns are also along the south wall just inside the brick wall. Metal jacks have been added for support.
5. Porches, stoops, etc: A canopy above the first floor, west front, extends to the curb. It is supported by two steel columns and one cast-iron one, probably an original. On the north side, there is a brick bulkhead with wooden doors and steps leading to the basement. There are two wooden steps at the rear north door.
6. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys covered with metal and topped by decorative clay chimney pots.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance on the west is double glass and aluminum doors in a modern storefront. On the east, near the southeast corner, is a metal frame doorway with metal door.

On the north side, there is a wooden door at the east end. It has four panels, the top two of which are round-arched. A door near the west end is boarded up. Above it is a loft door with an iron hoisting bracket above.

- b. Windows and shutters: On the west front; there is a modern glass and aluminum storefront at the first floor. On the upper levels, the windows are boarded up.

On the north side, first floor, most of the windows are blocked up inside and shuttered on the outside. The window on the eastern end has a four-over-four-light single-hung sash, with iron bars across it on the inside.

On the second floor of the north side, the eastern window is shuttered closed. The other windows have six-over-six-light single-hung sash with wood shutters.

#### 8. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with ribbed metal. The canopy roof has corrugated metal covering.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Cornices are boxed and there is a deep rake board on the gable.

#### C. Description of Interior

##### 1. Floor plans

- a. Basement: the basement is partitioned near the center. It has a dirt floor and houses mechanical equipment.
- b. First floor: One large space.
- c. Second floor: Divided into two rooms. The front portion has grain bins.
- d. Attic: The attic is unfinished except for a wood floor.

- 2. Stairways: The stairway to the second floor is open and winds at the first floor. At the second floor there is a simple wooden balustrade and newel post.

- 3. Flooring: The main floor has vinyl asbestos tiles.

- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: The first-floor walls have white simulated wood paneling over plaster. The ceiling is a dropped acoustical tile ceiling. On the second floor, the walls are plaster and the ceiling structure is exposed.

- 5. Doorways and doors: Wood panel doors with simple wood surrounds.

- 6. Mechanical equipment: Central heating and air-conditioning on the first floor only. There is no heating on the second floor. Fluorescent lighting fixtures are on the first floor and porcelain sockets on the second.

D. Site:

The Store faces west on the southeast corner of Market and Front Streets near the center of the Frederica business district. There is a concrete sidewalk between the building and the curb on the north and west sides of the building.

Prepared by: John P. White  
Project Supervisor  
Historic American Buildings  
Survey  
July, 1975

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Primary Sources:

Deed Books: Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Kent County Court House, Dover, Delaware, 19901.

Will Books: Office of the Register of Wills, Kent County Court House, Dover, Delaware, 19901.

Orphans Court Records: Office of the Register in Chancery, Kent County Court House, Dover, Delaware, 19901.

Assessment Lists: Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware, 19901.

B. Secondary Sources:

Miller, Mary Emily. "Port Town on the Starboard, A History of Frederica, Delaware," Delaware History, XIV, (1970), pp. 111-134.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware. Vol. 2. Philadelphia: L. J. Richards & Co., 1888.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, State of Delaware, and was financed with funds provided by the State of Delaware. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1975 at the Historic American Buildings Survey Field Office, Dover, Delaware, by John P. White (Assistant Professor, Texas Tech University), Project Supervisor; James Stewart (University of Delaware), Sally Schwartz (Harvard University), Joan M. Norton (Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs), Project Historians; Charles B. Tonetti (Syracuse University), Architect; Student Assistant Architects, Scott Barnard (University of Pennsylvania), Frederick K. Read (University of Notre Dame), and Mark T. Wellen (Texas Tech University). The written data were edited by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, in February, 1983.